

Children and Family Services



Foster Youth Celebrate High School Graduations

HS Connection Staff

Graduating from high school is a milestone accomplishment. Each year, the Independent Living Program (ILP) sponsors a formal *Senior Celebration*, similar to a graduation party, to acknowledge and congratulate San Bernardino County foster youth who are graduating from high school. Meeting graduation requirements can be complex for foster youth who often transfer to several schools. These youth work with Educational Liaisons to recover credits received from all schools, make sure youth are on the right path to graduate high school and prepare youth for college. The number of graduating foster youth has increased 65 percent since the implementation of full-time Educational Liaisons.

“The goal of the event was to give credit to all high school seniors, class of 2013, and to recognize each senior for their academic efforts during their four years of high school,” said Supervising Social Service Practitioner Hugo Castellanos. “The youth’s achievement was not met without the collaboration of our social workers, educational liaisons, ILP team, contractors and many of our community partners who were there to assist in any way possible.”

This year, 96 foster youth graduated from high schools throughout the county and 66 attended *Senior Celebration* at the Sierra Lakes Golf Club in Fontana. The young men wore their best slacks and suits, while the young ladies donned dresses for the special occasion. Foster Alumni Roxie Findsen spoke words of encouragement to the audience of graduates while Judge Christopher Marshall and CFS Deputy Director Helen Parrott expressed their support and congratulations. After indulging in a buffet-style dinner, each graduate was called to the stage to receive a personalized graduation certificate and gift followed by an evening of dancing and photos.

“It was a pleasure seeing our seniors leaving Sierra Lakes Golf Club with their heads up high and with a good sense of accomplishment,” said Castellanos. “Overall, it was a fun night.”



Youth displays her graduation certificate



The celebration continues with dancing

County of San Bernardino
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